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(a) whether the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited had decided to set up a Petro-Chemicals Complex in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the amount of investment involved therein;

(c) whether the financial viability of the project and marketability of its products has been examined; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) BPGL is exploring the possibility of setting up of a petro-chemical complex at a location in coastal Tamil Nadu through a joint venture company. Details regarding capital investment, commercial and financial viability, etc. would be known only after finalisation of DFR.

[Translation]

Withdrawal of subsidy on Petroleum Products

815. SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR SINGH : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to withdraw subsidy on petroleum products and natural gas;

(b) the percentage increase in the prices of petroleum products after the withdrawal of subsidy;

(c) the total external debt resulted due to extending subsidy on petroleum products, till date;

(d) whether the Government have formulated any comprehensive welfare scheme in place of subsidy on petroleum; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) and (b) The Government have been exploring various options to contain the deficit in the pool account and reduce the subsidy on some of the petroleum products. The extent of reduction in subsidy would depend on various factors like international prices, tariff policy and demand etc.

(c) to (e) The total subsidy on the petroleum products during 1996-97 was around Rs. 18,440 crores and is estimated to be about Rs. 18,660 crores during 1997-98. Subsidy on petroleum products is met from the oil pool account mechanism. IOC is the canalising agency for import of crude oil and petroleum products in the country. The ceiling of short term foreign currency borrowings for financing the oil imports has been progressively enhanced from USD 1.53 billion upto February, 96 to the present sanctioned limit of USD 3.5 billion. In addition, the corporation has also availed US $ 200 million 7 years loan for import of oil. The actual level of short term foreign currency borrowing of IOC for import of oil was US $ 2.04 billion as on 31.3.97.

[English]

Development of Road and Port Infrastructure Facilities

816. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the liberalised Surface Transport Policy, significant private/foreign investment has started flowing for development of road and port infrastructure facilities;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the projects received and cleared so far, State-wise;

(c) the progress achieved on current projects, project-wise and the target date of their completion;

(d) the steps taken to remove the snags while implementing the projects/schemes; and

(e) the steps on the anvil to encourage private sector participation in the transport sector?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Details for both road and port sectors are given in the Statement attached.

(d) No major snags have been experienced in the implementation of road projects so far. There is a Steering group for each BOT road project to resolve the bottlenecks, if any. In both Roads and Ports sectors simplified and transparent guidelines have already been published.

(e) As and when necessary, new steps are taken to encourage private sector participation as a part of continuous process.

Statement

Private/Foreign Investment in Projects in Road and Port Sectors

AD SECTOR

No.	Project	State	Progress	Target date for completion
	Thane-Bhiwandi bypass	Maharashtra	Completed	—
	Udaipur bypass	Rajasthan	26%	1998
	Chalthan Road Over-Bridge	Gujarat	40%	1998
	Six Bridges in Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	work just started	2002

PORTS SECTOR

The following projects have been approved during the financial year 1996-97 and 1997-98 for private sector participation.

1996-97

S. No.	Name of Project
(i)	Virtual Jetty by IOC at Kandla.
(ii)	Virtual Jetty by HPCL at Kandla
(iii)	Creation of LPG facility at New Mangalore Port through HPCL.
(iv)	Creation of Off-Shore Stockyard and berth (OSB) of Mormugao Coast
(v)	Captive Jetty by M/s. SPIC Electric Power Corporation at Tuticorin.
(vi)	Captive Jetty for Nagarjuna Fertilisers & Chemicals at New Mangalore.

1997-98 (Till date)

(i)	Container Terminal at JNPT
(ii)	Construction of berths 5A/6A at Mormugao Port.
(iii)	Construction of Coal Jetty at Mumbai Port by M/s. Tata Electric Company.

Note: The above projects are at various stages of progress.

[Translation]

Admission to Boys in Correspondence Course

817. SHRI RAMACHANDRA VEERAPPA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Patrachar Vidyalaya ke liye alag parisar ka sujhav" appearing in the 'Navbharat Times' dated June 21, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts thereof and the action taken thereon;

(c) whether only girls are allowed to take 10 + 2 CBSE examination through correspondence and not boys;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government are considering to provide admission to boys also in 10 + 2 correspondence course directly; and

(f) if so, the time by which the approval is likely to be given in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Construction of Hubli-Dharwad Bypass Road in Karnataka

818. SHRI SHIVANAND H. KOUJALGI : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with the Government for the construction of Hubli-Dharwad (Karnataka) bypass road;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Hubli-Dharwad bypass having a length of 30 Km. is being taken up on Build, Operate and Transfer basis.